

December 4, 2013

# EXTREME FAITH

**Who are we?**

“Knowing who we are is knowing who God is and the community we belong to.”

What Do You  
Must Do You



In the Mirror?

## WHO WE ARE

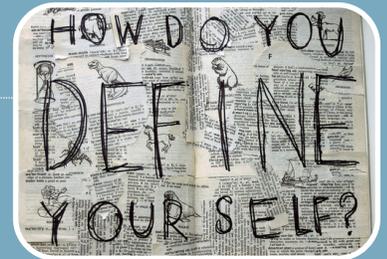
### How Do You see Yourself...

Take a look at yourself in the mirror, what do you see? Do you like what you see or do you want to make changes? How we see ourselves says a lot about who we are and what we think ourselves. Our self image how we view and think of ourself is so important! In middle school it can be hard to like who you are, you want so much to be like this person or be just like everyone else. It is hard to stand out in middle school, when everyone else is saying we should all look and act the same as everyone else! But that is part of the problem isn't it, we are not like everyone else, we are all different, even identical twins are different. They may look the same but they are not the same person. So what are we to do, if you have struggles with liking who you are, and feeling good about yourself, the way you look, the way you act, the talents you have, it is a big weight on your shoulders. It is hard to think of anything else, because the things that are weighing you down, are things that you can just change over night! Catch this if you are not real pleased with your self image, if you question who you are, then you are likely to be bullied, or bully others. That is just the truth. Bullies will look for those who are not so sure of who they are, and often times bullies are people who are not so sure of who they are and they bully

others so that they might have a false sense of power. Knowing who you are and who God made you to be is the first step to freedom!

Check out what God says about you. Psalm 139:13-18 says this about you. God, you created all the complex parts of my body, while I was still inside my mother. Thank you, Lord, for creating me, I know you cared when you made me. While my bones were still forming, before anyone else knew who I was, you knew I, was alive. You could see who I was even before I was born, and you had already planned my days on earth before I lived any one of them. You think about me all the time. You love me so much. Every minute, even when I get up in the morning, you are thinking about me.

Wow if God made you than you are perfect because all that God does is perfect. God made you and He thinks about you, all the time. He is waiting for you to ask Him what it is you were made for. He did not make you to question why you are this way or that way, God made you for a purpose and to be confident in who He made you. Believe it, you are important and you were not made to be like everyone else.



Who We Are

How do you define yourself? I love that this image is written on pages of a dictionary, but if I were to make this image I would write those words on pages of the Bible. I believe that if we are looking to define ourself we need to do it from the Bible. For it is in the Bible that we learn that God made each of us. But if you were to define yourself how would you do it? What words would you use? How would you explain yourself to someone else?

The words that come from your mouth start in your heart. Can you say that you love yourself? Can you say that you are worth knowing, worth loving? If you define yourself from the world then you might win or you might lose. But if you define yourself from the Bible and you know who you are, then you will win every time.

# Believing in something Bigger than yourself

"Rise" by Shawn McDonald

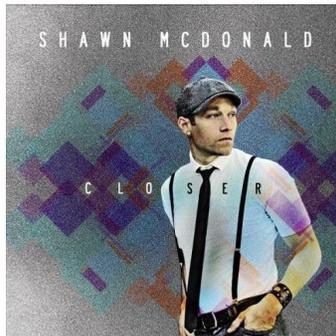
"Rise"

Yes I will rise  
Out of these ashes rise  
From this trouble I have found  
And this rubble on the ground  
I will rise  
Cause He Who is in me  
Is greater than I will ever be  
And I will rise

Sometimes my heart is on the ground  
And hope is nowhere to be found  
Love is a figment I once knew  
And yet I hold on to what I know is true

Yes I will rise  
Out of these ashes rise  
From this trouble I have found  
And this rubble on the ground  
I will rise  
Cause He Who is in me  
Is greater than I will ever be  
And I will rise

Well I keep on coming to this place  
That I don't know quite how to face  
So I lay down my life in hopes to die  
That somehow I might rise



This song is featured on  
Closer album  
by  
Shawn McDonald  
[ 2 ]

# Real Life Heroes

Brother Barout

Laos

1975

"A Night Swim"

"One hundred soldiers with machine guns circled the few acres surrounding the Lao Biblical Training School. It was 1975, the year the Communists conquered Laos. Along with the other sixty students and our teachers, I was held in a small room for two weeks while we were interrogated. One by one, we were called before the soldiers who tried to get us to denounce Christ. We had little food and ate grass out in the school yard. "The Communist army then brought three hundred government students to scream at us in an organized 'demonstration of the people\* These government students surrounded our school shout-ing, 'Everything belongs to the government! Your pigs and fish are ours!' The soldiers then took all the animals that the Bible school had been using for food. "Finally, the soldiers gave up trying to convert us to follow Marx and Lenin, the founders of Communism. Most of us were allowed to go home after two weeks. But Brother Barout chose not to go home. "On the Sunday morning we were released, I decided to escape to Thailand to have more freedom to share Christ. Thousands of Laotian refugees who had fled from the Communists lived in camps in Thailand, just across the Mekong River. There were only three Christians among them. "Another Bible student decided to come with me. We could not say good-bye to our families. First, there was no time; and second, we could not trust them since they were not Christians. The government had turned families against each other. "The Mekong River is very wide, and that winter was the coldest we had seen. I was also sick with a fever and thought I might die. Standing in the bush on the edge of the water, I asked my Christian friend, 'How can we go?' "He replied courageously, 'We are Christians. We will go to heaven if we drown. If we die, we die together\* "At 10:00 p.m. we entered the cold, muddy river. We both had Bibles in large plastic bags tied on our backs. I thought, 'Lord, if we die, at least when they find our Bibles, they will know that we are Christians. We were swimming only fifty yards from one of the guard towers on shore. My friend was so cold that he was shaking. When he shifted his plastic bag to his chest to try to float on top of it, I told him to get off or they would see him. He splashed a little as he got back down in the water, so a spotlight came over from the shore to where the bag had splashed. We heard the guards say, 'Oh, a big fish.' "Finally, in the darkness, we climbed up on the muddy river bank in Thailand. Looking at our waterproof watches we saw that our swim had taken 48 minutes. We were free and continued to serve the Lord."

Featured Story from  
the book  
Jesus Freaks dc Talk  
and the voice of the  
Martyrs



Today Laos still is not free. A few churches are officially open in Vientiane (the capital), but nowhere else. Three out of four of those are considered subversive to the government and are watched. The police are very strict. Recently, when a Christian man helped to feed some poor villagers, he told them of an open church in the capital. Thirty-five of the villagers went to visit the church and thirty of them gladly received Jesus. When they returned to their village, the authorities took away their jobs. Pray for new believers in all countries, that God will strengthen them by the Word that is in their hearts and will help them to withstand persecution. Pray for strength for those who would risk their lives to take the Gospel to people who have yet to hear it. Pray for their protection and that their efforts will reap new souls.

## CHARACTER

### EXTREME APPLICATION

Your self reflection is the key that opens the doors to who you show the world you are. You and who you see yourself as is the image that you should show to the world. That is Character, showing the world who you really know yourself to be. We tend to think one thing about ourself, and we show the world something else. Change it learn who you really are and show the world who you are who you know you are and live in true character!

### Think About it (Tension in knowing who you are)

Who are you, that is a big question and it can cover many different areas for our lives. What we need to focus on is this, who is bigger than us, and all the people on the planet? That would be God! We must know what God says about us and we must believe it more than we believe anything else. However this can be hard since the people that are telling us who we are most of the time don't know or believe in God. We have to find out the truth about who we are so that we can live with a healthy reflection of who we are. There is a constant attack on our self image telling us that we are not as good as we should be, or that this or that needs to change in us. Self image is a hard thing to grasp and to hold onto. But more than ever we need to find our true self image and live out life in it!

The world and the culture that we live in is constantly trying to change us and make us become something that we were never ever to be. Why because if we become who we are then God is glorified! Which means He gets the credit that He deserves. When we don't like who we are because we believe the world and what it says about us, well it's like tearing up a drawing that someone worked hard on. It does not glorify the artist at all.

So where do we start? We start by really taking a look at all that God has made us to be. We are called His son's and daughters in the Bible. We are His children, and He loves us.

Wow think about it you are a child of God. That means you are perfect and that you should believe that more than you believe any of the silly things that don't line up with that truth. Ask God questions, ask Him to show you great things about yourself. Let Him show you who you are and all that you were made to be!

You the child of God lead the way, you the child of God have a great big daddy, who loves you and thinks your are great and wonderful. You the child of God have nothing to be ashamed of and you must realize that you don't have to fit in you were made to stand out and to shine, showing the world that your Daddy is the great God, who loves the world. Hold your head high and ask Him to show you great things!



# DIG IN

**Read: John 1:12 But to all who have received him those who believe in his name he has given the right to become God's children ...**

1. Compared to others your age, when it comes to the categories below how would you rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 (5 being average)?

Your Looks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Your Smarts	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Your Personality	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Your Popularity	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. What are some things about yourself that you are proud of?

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3. Is this you or not? Answer me or not me.

- a. I like the way I look.
- b. I live my life the way I think others want me to live it.
- c. Sometimes I wish I were someone else.
- d. I don't think I am normal.
- e. I sometimes do things I know I shouldn't, in order to be accepted.
- f. I believe God loves me just the way I am.
- g. When I meet new people, I worry they may not like me the way I am.

4. The following is a paraphrase of Psalm 139:13-18. Write your name in the blanks and then read it to yourself.

God, you created all the complex parts of my body, while I was still inside my mother. Thank you, Lord, for creating me, \_\_\_\_\_ . I know you cared when you made me. While my bones were still forming, before anyone else knew who I was, you knew I, \_\_\_\_\_ , was alive. You could see who I was even before I was born, and you had already planned my days on earth before I lived any one of them. You think about me all the time. You love me so much.

Every minute, even when I get up in the morning, you are thinking about me.

What does God think of you?

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UNDERSTANDING  
**WHO WE ARE**

